

CHAPTER V.

FOREST ADMINISTRATION.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGE.

105. The Camp was despatched by rail to Godhra from head-quarters in the last days of October. After attending at Thána on the occasion of the visit to that station of His Excellency the Governor, I joined my Camp at Godhra on the 5th November and was present during His Excellency the Governor's visit to the Panch Maháls. At Godhra I was joined by Mr. Millett, Divisional Forest Officer, Working-Plans, and in company with him I inspected a considerable portion of the forest area of the Godhra Range both from Godhra and from a central Camp at Kandia. After completing the inspection of the Divisional Office at Godhra the Camp moved to Vejalpur on the 4th December, Mr. Millett being left to complete a more extensive and detailed inspection of the Godhra Reserves with a view to the preparation of a Working-Plan. Though in Godhra the teak is very nearly at its limit, I have never seen such complete natural reproduction of this species as in the Godhra Forests, but unfortunately this advantage is almost completely lost through the annual fires which sweep through these reserves. From Vejalpur the northern forests of Kálol were inspected and the Camp was moved to Chámpáner at the foot of Pawgarh Hill on the 15th. The forests here are not intrinsically so valuable as those in the north of the division, partly because only a part of them contain teak, and partly owing to their inaccessibility. They are however, professionally, most interesting; for their approximate age and history are known and they should yield some valuable data as to rate of growth when the Working-Plan Officer takes them in hand. From Chámpáner the Camp marched to Baroda, whence it was sent off by train on the 24th to Balsár. During the Christmas holidays the orders of Government directing me to report on the Reserved Forests of Modása were received and the Camp was accordingly sent by rail to Ahmedabad and thence marched to Harsool, where the Collector was interviewed. Thence I marched to Modása and south through the whole Modása Petha, inspecting the reserves, *viā* Kapadvanj to the Railway at Dákor. Thence the Camp was once more moved by train to Kim, whence I marched through the Mándvi Táluka of Surat, inspecting the Forest Reserves of that most important range, more especially in connection with the special measures of fire protection initiated by Mr. Wallinger, the Divisional Forest Officer. Up to the 5th March when I left Mándvi *en route* for the Dángs, these measures had been completely successful. From Mándvi I marched through Gáikwári territory to Mahiskatri in the Dángs, where I was unfortunately delayed for 10 days owing to my whole establishment being prostrated with fever. I had intended to have inspected some of the Derbbaoti Forests, but was obliged to omit this in order to reach Waghái by the 20th, when the annual darbár held by the Divisional Forest Officer for the payment of the half-year's rent to the Rájáhs was fixed to come off. I was particularly anxious to attend this darbár as it was rumoured that the Rájáhs were dissatisfied with the demarcation sanctioned and intended to take advantage of the darbár to 'demonstrate.' They did in fact refuse to accept the enhanced rate of rent sanctioned by Government, demanding the old rent, the cancellation of the demarcation, and a return to the *status quo ante*. I am glad to say, however, that after several hours of talking we were able to induce them to accept their rent at the enhanced rate provisionally, subject to an appeal to the Political Agent at the May darbar. From Waghái I moved *viā* Básda and Balsár to Dáhánu, which was reached on the 6th April. Here I was again delayed, for my whole establishment was again prostrated by fever. Some of my private servants were so ill that they had to be replaced. Leaving Dáhánu on the 15th April, I marched *viā* Kase and Manor to Váda, and thence *viā* Akłoli and Parol to Ghodbandar, inspecting numerous coupes in the Dáhánu, Máhim, Váda, Bhiwandi and Bassein Ranges. The system of working in force in Thána seems to be well suited to the conditions required by the circumstances of the district. I was fairly well satisfied on the whole with what I saw of the results of this system of working, which has now been in force for 6 or 8 years. But I cannot disguise the fact that the future of the Thána

Forests is jeopardized by the constantly recurring forest fires. Reproduction for the next rotation is, I think, amply secured by the coppice shoots from the stools of the trees cut, but it must be remembered, that these stools cannot be expected to go on coppicing indefinitely and that it is therefore absolutely necessary to supplement them in each rotation by a certain proportion of new seedling growth. This, I regret to record, we are not now doing to the necessary extent, and the reason of the failure is undoubtedly forest fires. After a short stay at Ghodbandar, I returned to head-quarters for the monsoon on 29th May.

106. The various divisions were held by officers as follows:—

No.	Division.	Name of Officer.	Rank.	Designation.	Period of holding charge.	
					From	To
1	East Thána	C. Greathead	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Divisional Forest Officer.	1st July 1894	19th March 1895.
		G. P. Millett	Do. do. 4th Grade.	Do.	20th March 1895	30th May 1895.
2	West Thána	C. Greathead	Do. do. 3rd Grade.	Do.	31st May 1895	30th June 1895.
		G. P. Millett	Do. do. 4th Grade.	Do.	1st July 1894	10th November 1894.
3	Surat	C. M. Hodgson	Do. do. 4th Grade.	Do.	11th November 1894	30th June 1895.
		W. A. Wallinger	Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, 2nd Grade.	Do.	1st July 1894	11th June 1895.
4	Panch Mahals	C. G. Dalia	Do. do. 4th Grade.	Do.	12th June 1895	30th June 1895.
		W. F. D. Fisher	Assistant Conservator of Forests, 2nd Grade.	Do.	1st July 1894	27th July 1894.
5	Working-Plans	A. Stewart	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do.	28th July 1894	12th June 1895.
		W. A. Wallinger	Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade.	Do.	13th June 1895	30th June 1895.
		G. P. Millet	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 4th Grade.	Do.	1st July 1894	Do.

The following officers held charge of the sub-division during the year:—

No.	Division.	Name of Officer.	Rank.	Designation.	Period of holding charge.	
					From	To
1	East Thána	A. N. Master	Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Sháhpur Sub-division Forest Officer.	1st July 1894	30th June 1895.
		Do	Do. do. 4th Grade.	Kalyán Sub-division Forest Officer.	Do.	5th July 1895.
2	West Thána	K. B. Phadke	Do. do. 3rd Grade.	Do.	9th July 1894	30th June 1895.
		V. D. P. Rebeiro	Do. do. 4th Grade.	Bassein Sub-division Forest Officer.	1st July 1894	2nd January 1895.
3	Surat	C. M. Hodgson	Acting Deputy Conservator of Forests, 4th Grade.	Do.	3rd January 1895	17th February 1895.
		V. D. P. Rebeiro	Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do.	18th February 1895	30th June 1895.
4	Working-Plans	W. R. Gaunde	Do. do. 1st Grade.	Dáhnu Sub-division Forest Officer.	9th August 1894	22nd February 1895.
		Shaikh Hassan Ali	Acting Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, 4th Grade.	Do.	23rd February 1895	22nd April 1895.
5	Working-Plans	Mahomed Ali	Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade.	Do.	33rd April 1895	30th June 1895.
		W. R. Gaunde	Do. do. 4th Grade.	Surat Sub-division Forest Officer.	1st July 1894	Do.
		C. G. Dalia	Do. do. 4th Grade.			

107. The following are the minutes recorded by the various Collectors in forwarding the forest administration reports of their districts:—

(1). Mr. Cappel's minute on the West Thána report :

"1. The revenue of the West Division has again considerably increased and the administration appears to have been as successful as could be expected considering the difficulties that have to be met.

"2. The conduct of prosecutions has been well managed, the percentage of failures being better by nearly 50 per cent. than in the previous year.

"3. Expenditure appears to have decreased, though, as remarked last year, the revenue of the Thána forests might bear a larger outlay. The need of this is the chief burden of Mr. Hodgson's report. Forest roads, more fencing, and increased establishment would apparently offer a good investment if, as is stated, the value of the forests is depreciated owing to want of access and if deficiency of protection leads to wholesale looting. If it is the fact that owing to the poor quality and insufficiency of the guards the re-afforestation of cleared compartments, on which the whole working plans scheme rests, is endangered and that the more valuable western forests are being slowly destroyed instead of improved, the situation is sufficiently serious. The undersigned knows nothing of the Thána forests, and it is for the Deputy Conservator to decide whether the case has been more successful on the whole than in the previous year. Fire-tracing appears to have been of little use and Mr. Hodgson gives reasons for believing the system to be unsuited to forests in this division.

"Mr. Hodgson's report is full and interesting."

(2). Mr. Cappel remarks on the East Thána Divisional Forest Officer's report :

"There is very little in this report which calls for remark by the Collector. The penal administration has on the whole shown progress; the number of detected offences and the number of cases compounded being larger than last year, while the total number of offences has remained practically stationary."

(3). The Collector of Panch Maháls remarks as follows on the Panch Maháls report :

"There has been considerable delay in the submission of the report, but Mr. Wallinger has explained the cause in his forwarding letter as mainly due to his having only been in this district for a few weeks during the latter part of the year under report, and the Collector is satisfied that the delay has certainly not been due to any want of industry or energy on the part of Mr. W. A. Wallinger.

"2. The movements of the late Divisional Forest Officer Mr. Stewart seem to have been somewhat hampered by the indifferent health of which he so constantly complains and also perhaps to some extent by lack of suitable means of locomotion.

"3. The financial results, as given in Chapter IV of the report, must be admitted to be on the whole satisfactory.

"4. The grazing rules seem to be working fairly smoothly, but mutterings of discontent and alleged hardship have been heard from time to time, and the Collector noticed when doing the jamábandi of the Dohad Táluka, the necessity for throwing open more of the full grown forest area to grazing. He found that in some cases the grass in closed, forests near villages had been sold in a hole-and-corner way for very little to Borahs or local money-lenders, who thus made a good thing out of the transaction at the expense of the poorer villagers. Care ought, the Collector considers, to be taken that the interests of Government cultivators are not sacrificed in this way for the benefit of speculators in grass.

"5. Another thing the Collector noticed was that in giving out land for cultivation undue and vexatious delay had arisen because the Revenue authorities had had to wait for the valuation of the standing teak trees by the Forest Department. He found that in most cases the teak trees standing in the numbers were small and of trifling value, and he considers that in future the Mámlatdárs should value these isolated trees without troubling the Forest Department who have quite enough to do in protecting and preserving the forest proper and have not the time to spare to count trees in remote and scattered waste numbers given out to cultivation. Seeing that in the greater portion of the Panch Maháls nearly every acre given out to cultivation has a more or less scattered growth of reserved trees, it is ridiculous to trouble the higher forest authorities before permitting the waste to be brought under the plough.

"6. Cases also come to notice where, after the reserved trees had been cut down by the Forest Department and sold, the cultivators were not allowed to touch the after-growth, and some Patels complained bitterly of the constant interference of petty Forest subordinates. It should, the Collector considers, be clearly understood that once the reserved trees in a survey number have been cut down and sold on behalf of the Forest Department, no further interference with the occupant should be attempted by the Forest Department or its underlings.

"7. The delay in the submission of Mr. Millett's Working-Plan Report of the Godhra Range is to be regretted. The report was received in this office in the beginning of April last, but before forwarding it on, my predecessor, Mr. Gibb, called for a statement from the Mámlatdár of Godhra showing the grazing requirements of the táluka. This statement and Mr. Millett's report were sent on to Mr. Wallinger in July last and he was asked kindly to compare the details of demand with his experience in the Surat district.

"8. The Working-Plan has been drawn up with the thoroughness and ability which usually distinguish Mr. Millett's work and will prove an excellent model for future guidance.

"9. In reviewing the forest reports of the Panch Maháls, it must never be forgotten that no attempt has as yet been made to *wark* the Government reserves! The land included in the reserves has been simply taken up and declared State forests, and nearly all the forest revenue hitherto realised in this district has been derived from the sale of Government timber on waste or occupied lands outside forest.

"10. Too much of the attention of forest subordinates has, perhaps, been devoted to realization of revenue from these outside sources, and the Collector fears that this distraction, or attraction, has not proved beneficial to due protection, care, and conservation of the forest proper. This, perhaps, partly accounts for the many cases of "loot" and "slackness" noticed by Mr. Stewart in his diary.

"11. Nearly every paragraph of the report under the heading 'Regulation of management' shows how necessary systematic concentration of attention on the due conservation of the forest reserves proper has become!

“ 12. Seventy-five cases of undetected forest fires and such estimates of damage done as Rs. 103 for 20,311 acres of forest burnt speak for themselves !

“ 13. The Collector considers no good purpose would be served by his following Mr. Stewart through the arguments leading to the conclusion that ‘ more establishment is necessary.’ It seems to the Collector, as above stated, that due concentration of existing forces is what is required at present.

“ 14. The increase in impoundings is not a wholesome feature in the year’s administration and the statement that ‘ no end of cattle has been impounded and yet the evil continues points its own moral ! ’

“ 15. German, French and Russian forest experience proves that no successful forest conservation has ever been possible with a hostile country side, and the Collector is of opinion that every effort should continue to be made to work with and not against the agricultural population in the management of the remote and very difficult Panch Mahals forests.”

(4). Mr. Lely, Collector of Surat, was absent on leave and Mr. Cumine busy with the Dhulia riots, so that there was no minute recorded on the Surat Report.

108. The extra Assistants have worked well, but Mr. Wáman Rámchandra Gaunde was much troubled with fever and for nearly two months of the working season was absent, during which time Mr. Hasanalli Mahamadalli, Range Forest Officer of Dáhánu, acted for him.

109. Mr. Wallinger, extra Assistant Conservator, as Divisional Forest Officer, Súrat, worked very well and deserves commendation for his efforts to protect the Mándvi forests from fire.

110. On the whole the Range Forest Officers have worked well during the year ; the following are specially mentioned in the divisional reports :—

1. Hassanalli Mahomedalli.
2. Sheik Ahmed Nur Mahamad.
3. Sadashiv Pandurang.
4. Narayan Rajaram Wadwatharkar.
5. Hari Anant Bhadbhade.
6. Sheik Usman Shiek Edrus.
7. Tukaram Sakharan Mali.

111. In addition to the 4 men convicted of penal offences, as mentioned in paragraphs 50, 51 and 52, 13 Forest guards were dismissed during the year, the reasons assigned being over-staying leave and general misconduct.

112. The Divisional Forest Officer’s office establishments are reported to have worked well as has that of the Deputy Conservator of Forests under Mr. Shiyram Bhikáji Rángnekar.

113. The mortality amongst the guards was not so heavy as last year. Only 9 guards died—6 in East Thána and 3 in Panch Mahals ; all these guards died of fever ; a clerk in the West Thána and a Surveyor in the Working-Plans divisions died of fever.

R. C. WROUGHTON,
Deputy Conservator of Forests, Northern Circle.

Bándra, 24th October 1895.